

To whom it may concern:

The one beacon of hope for Media in our community is an organization called the "Community Media Center." Not only do they host a Community Radio Station that is staffed almost entirely by volunteers (80+ people), but they also run a News Organization, Public Access Television, an organization for Internet Technology and Web Site help for non-profits in the community, and have just purchased an historic Venue of significant size in order to best serve our community in even more ways.

The above mentioned organization, in addition to NPR and other public television stations are really, in my opinion, the only institutions in West Michigan that provide certain information and programming which happen to be most in line with my interests, and in the interest of the large majority of my family, friends, and acquaintances. Im not talking only about content that has been produced locally, but I also speak of information, programming, and especially music that slips through the cracks of commercial, for-profit stations!

The CMC offers classes and training in all of the above mentioned areas, and allows anyone with the will and determination to share their views with their community to do so.

A great example of this is the "Amazing Darryl Nathan." A man sitting in line for a homeless shelter asked a volunteer walking around with a GRTV camera about what they were doing. When Nathan discovered that "anyone," after the proper training, can borrow this expensive equipment and produce his or her own show for broadcast on television, he thought it was too good to be true! No one had ever given him a shot to express himself.

With a little leg work he verified everything, and then set out to produce his own variety show. The show became quite the cult favorite in Grand Rapids. GRTV and the "Amazing Darryl Nathan" recieved lots of attention and eventually ended up selling out regular shows at "The Intersection," a local concert venue, and even went on to receive even some national attention. I couldnt believe it myself, but I saw Nathan on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show--" not once but twice!

In addition to that example, there are countless other things of great benefit to our community that would not be around if not for this organization. To name a few, the "Hat Trick Concert Series," hosted by WYCE, brings National Acts to town to perform. The artists fees are covered by event sponsors, and admission to the shows is collected with 100% going to a different local charity each time. The "Reel Time" Film Festival allows kids to produce their own independent short films, and have them viewed by many and judged at a film festival.

If these organizations did not exist, an incredible void would exist in our city. I cant imagine living anywhere that does not have these types of organizations and events--Seriously, this a reason to live here!

As I understand it, we are lucky here in West Michigan.

These organizations are few and far between in our country, which is amazing to me. Radio and Television is becomming less and less of a benefit to people and is tumbling into a direction that frankly scares me. Why cant I hear and see things that I care about on my airwaves, aside from on one or two small underdog stations? And now the government is considering cutting out funding for NPR and other similar organizations?! I dont understand.

I strongly urge you to please do your best to make our airwaves in the public interest. Support community radio, support NPR, and support our community.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Peter Bruinsma
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